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## ANIMAL TALES FROM NORTH CAROLINA.

## I. WHEN BRER DEER AND BRER TERRAPIN RUNNED A RACE.

BRER DEER and Brer Terrapin was a-courting of Mr. Coon's daughter. Brer Deer was a peart chap, and have the airs of the quality, no put-on bigotry ways ; Brer Deer am a right sure 'nough gentleman, that he is. Well, old Brer Terrapin am a poor, slow, old man ; all the creeters wonder how the gal can smile on hisself when Mr. Deer flying round her, but them what knows tells how, when old man Terrapin lay hisself out, he have a mighty taking way with the gals, and the gals in the old times mighty like the gals these here times, and ain't got no sense nohow.

Well, old man Coon he favor Brer Deer, and he powerful set again Brer Terrapin, and he fault him to the gals constant ; but the more Brer Coon fault Brer Terrapin, the more the hard-headed gal giggle and cut her eye when Brer Terrapin come 'bout ; and old Brer Coon, he just nigh 'bout outdone with her foolishness, and he say he gwine set down on the fooling.

So he say, Brer Coon did, how Brer Deer and Brer Terrapin shall run a seven-mile race, and the one what get there first shall surely have the gal, 'cause he feel that sure in he mind, Brer Coon do, that Brer Deer nat'rally bound to outrun poor old Brer Terrapin.

But I tell you, sah, when old Brer Terrapin pull he head in he house, and shut up all the doors, and just give himself to study, when he do that there way, the old man ain't just dozing away the time. Don't you mind, sah, he have a mighty bright eye, Brer Terrapin have, sah.

Well, Brer Terrapin, he say he run the race, if he can run in the water, 'cause he 'low he mighty slow on the foots. And Brer Deer and Brer Coon, they talk it over to theyselves, and they 'low Brer Deer mighty slow in the water, and so they set the race 'long the river bank. Brer Deer, he gwine run seven miles on the bank, and Brer Terrapin, he gwine run 'long the shore in the water, and he say every mile he gwine raise he head out the water and say, "Oho ! here I is."

Den Brer Deer and Brer Coon laugh to burst theyselves, 'cause they lay out for Brer Terrapin done pass the first mile, Brer Deer done win the race.

Well, sah, Brer Terrapin he have six brothers, and he set one in the water every mile, and he set one in the water at the starting-place, and the old man, he set hisself in the water at the seven-mile post. O my, massa, dat old Brer Terrapin, he got a head on hisself, he surely have.

Well, Brer Coon and Brer Deer, they come down to the water, and they see Brer Terrapin out there in the water, an' Brer Coon, he place Brer Deer, and tell him hold on till he get hisself there, 'cause he bound to see the end of the race. So he get on the horse and whip up, and directly Brer Deer and Brer Terrapin start out, and when Brer Deer come to the first milestone he stick his head out the water, and he say, "Oho, here I is!" and Brer Deer, he just set to faster, 'cause he know Brer Terrapin mighty short-winded, but when he git to the two-mile post, sure 'nough, there Brer Terrapin stick he head out and say, "Oho, here I is!" and Brer Deer, he that astonished he nigh 'bout break down, but he set to and do he best, and when he come to the three-mile post, 'fore God if there ain't Brer Terrapin's head come out the water, and he just holler out, "Oho, here I is!"

But Brer Deer he push on, and every mile that there bodacious old Brer Terrapin. Well, when Brer Deer come a-puffing and a-blowing up to the last-most post, and Brer Coon set there on the horse, and just 'fore Brer Deer come up, if there ain't sure 'nough old Brer Terrapin, just where he done been waiting all the time, and just 'fore Brer Deer fotch round *the* bend, he just stick up he head and say, "Oho, Brer Deer, here I is for yourself!"

But Brer Terrapin never tell the gals 'bout his management, and how he get there that soon.

## II. WHEN MR. TERRAPIN WENT RIDING ON THE CLOUDS.

Have they done tell you 'bout ole Mr. Grumble Terrapin? Well, one day ole Brer Terrapin was mighty bad, and making up a poor mouth, and a-grumbling and a-fussing, 'cause he have to creep on the ground. When he meet Brer Rabbit, he grumble 'cause he can't run like Brer Rabbit, an' when he meet Brer Buzzard he grumble 'cause he can't fly in the clouds like Brer Buzzard, and so grumble, grumble, constant.

Well, the folkses stand it till they nigh 'bout wore out, and so they 'gree amongst theyselves, the folkses did, and they 'gree how they gwine take Brer Terrapin up in the clouds and drop him.

So one day, when Brer Terrapin grumble to Miss Crow he can't fly in the clouds, Miss Crow she say, she did, "Brer Terrapin, go get on my back, and I give you a ride in the clouds." So Brer Terrapin, he mighty set up in he mind, and he get on Miss Crow's back, and they sail off fine, and they sails this yer way, and they sails that yer way. Brer Terrapin, he look down on all he friends, and he feel that proudful he don't take no noticement when they take off they hats to hisself.

But presently Miss Crow she get tired, and so she say, old Miss

Crow did, "This yer just as high as I can go, Brer Terrapin, but here come Brer Buzzard ; he can fly heap higher than what I can, Brer Buzzard can, and you just get on his back, and he sail you heap higher."

So Brer Terrapin, he get on Brer Buzzard back, and they sail up higher and higher, till Brer Terrapin can't make out he friends when they take off they hats to hisself, and he say that the bestest day of his life, Brer Terrapin do, and they sails over the woods, and they sails over the waters.

Then Brer Buzzard, he get broke down a-toting Brer Terrapin, and he 'low : "This here just as high as I can go, Brer Terrapin, but there come Miss Hawk ; she can go a heap higher than what I can," and Miss Hawk she say she be delighted to take Brer Terrapin to ride, — that just what Miss Hawk done tell Brer Terrapin.

So Brer Terrapin, he get on Miss Hawk's back, and they go higher and higher, and Brer Terrapin he 'joy it fine, and he say to hisself, "I 'se getting up in the clouds now, sure 'nough."

But directly here come King Eagle, and he say, "Oho, Brer Terrapin, you don't call this yer sailing. Oho, Sis Hawk, if you gwine sail Brer Terrapin, why don't you take him up where he can get a sight?" But Miss Hawk, she 'bliged to 'low that just as high as she can go.

Then King Eagle say, "Well, just get on my back, and get a sure 'nough ride." So Brer Terrapin, he get on King Eagle's back, and they go up and up, till ole Brer Terrapin he get skeered, and he beg King Eagle to get down ; but King Eagle, he just laugh and sail higher and higher, till old Brer Terrapin say to hisself he wish he neber study 'bout flying in the clouds, and he say, Brer Terrapin did : "Oh please, King Eagle, take me down ; I that skeered, I 'se 'bout to drop," and he fault hisself cause he was such a grumbling fool, and he say to hisself, if he ever get on he own foots once more, he never grumble 'cause he can't fly in the clouds, but King Eagle, he just make like he gwine up higher and higher, and poor old Brer Terrapin, he dat skeered, he can't hold on much more, and he 'bout lose he hold.

Just den he think how he got a spool of thread in he pocket, what Miss Terrapin done send him to fetch home from the store that day, and he tie the end to King Eagle's leg, unbeknownst to him, Brer Terrapin did, and then he drop de spool, and he take hold of the thread, and hold it fast in he hands, and he slip down to the ground, and you never hear old Brer Terrapin grumble 'cause he can't run or fly, 'cause the old man he done fly that yer day to satisfy hisself, that he did, sure's yer born, he did fly that yer day.

III. WHY THE SPIDER NEVER GOT IN THE ARK.

The spider ain't one of the sure 'nough creeping things what was in the ark, bless your soul no, Miss, that he ain't; the spider am on this here earth just as a 'minder what we be fetch back to, if we don't walk with the Lord Jesus.

In the long time back, the black man he have no Lord Jesus, he only have the great God of the mountain; and the black man he mighty big sinner, and the great God, he just 'bliged to hold the sinner in, and sometimes he have to make a *instrerment* (instrument).

Well, Miss, one year the peoples was mighty gone away; I can't just tell you all the sins they done commit, 'cause I 's mighty old, and I've seen a heap of trouble, and when I done hear the old folks tell it I was just a chap, but the great God he send the fever, and he make all the crops burn up on the face of the earth, and he do heap more works, and ever what I just disremembers; I've seen a heap of trouble, Miss, but they hard-headed and rebelling, they just go on after Satan. And the great God, he have to make a instrerment, and he do it this yer way. The great feast time was come, the sacred feast when they all know they have to bring the offerings to the great God; but old Satan, he 'suade them to have it a dance feast; and the great God, he knew what a working in they mind, so in the night, before he make a instrerment, he make a great spider, more big than that church over there, Miss, and before daybreak that spider done spin a web more than a mile; it take in all the feast ground, but it so fine no sinner man could see it; and when they go up to the sinful frolic, that web it just take them in, and they go round and round on it, till they come to the great spider's mouth, and he swallow them up, the last one of them. After that the spider, he get smaller and smaller, till these here times he just a little chap, what the Lord just suffer to go about for a 'minder, but he was never in the ark, Lord bless you, no, Miss.

IV. HOW COME BRER BAR SLEEP IN THE WINTER.

When the animals was young, Brer Bar, he never sleep in the winter, no more 'n the rest. The way it was in them days, old man Bar was flying roun' more same than the tother creeters, and he was the meanest one in the lot, and 'cause he the biggest he get in he mind that he king of the country, and the way he put on the animals was scand'lous, that it was.

Well, they was all crossways wid the old man a long time, but they bound to step up when he tell 'em, cause you kin see in these

times old Brer Bar ain't a powerful man, but he just *onery* side what he was in the old times. 'Pears like all the animals is getting mighty low down these yer times, 'cept old Sis Coon, and sure you born she get more heady ebery year.

Well, they talk it over 'twixt themselves many and many a day, how they gwine take down Mr. Bar. They know he mighty man to sleep in the dark, and one day Brer Rabbit 'low that they stop the old man up when he sleep in a dark tree; he take a mighty long nap, and they get a little comfort.

So they all watch out, and when the old man sleep that night in a hollow tree they all turn in and tote rocks and brush, and stop up the hole.

And sure 'nough, when morning come, Brer Bar don't know it, and he just sleep on; when he wake up he see it all dark, and he say day ain't break yet, and he turn over and go sleep, and there the old man sleep just that a way till the leaves turn out the trees, and I 'spect the old man been sleeping there to this day; but the animals, they all hold the old man dead for sure, and they just feel a meddlesomness to move them rocks; and when they let the light in, old Brer Bar he just crack he eye and stretch hisself and come out, and when he see the spring done come he say, the old man did, that he done had a mighty comfortable winter, and from that time every year, when the cold come, old Brer Bar go to sleep.

#### V. HOW COME MR. BUZZARD TO HAVE A BALD HEAD.

One day, in the old times, Ann Nancy started out to find a good place for to build her house; she walk on till she find a break in a nice damp rock, and she set down to rest, and take 'servation of the points to throw her threads.

Presently, she hear a gret floppin' of wings, and the old Mr. Buzzard come flying down and light on the rock, with a big piece of meat in he mouth. Ann Nancy, she scroon in the rock and look out, and she hear Mr. Buzzard say, "Good safe, good safe, come down, come down," and sure 'nough, when he say it three times, a safe come down, and Mr. Buzzard, he open the door and put in he meat and say, "Good safe, good safe, go up, go up," and it go up aright, and Mr. Buzzard fly away.

Then Ann Nancy, she set and study 'bout it, 'cause she done see the safe was full of all the good things she ever hear of, and it come across her mind to call it and see if it come down; so she say, like Mr. Buzzard, "Good safe, good safe, come down, come down," and sure 'nough, when she say it three times, down it come, and she open the door and step in, and she say, "Good safe, good safe, go up, go up," and up she go, and she eat her fill, and have a fine time.

Directly she hear a voice say, "Good safe, good safe, come down, come down," and the safe start down, and Ann Nancy, she so scared, she don't know what to do, but she say soft and quickly, "Good safe, go up," and it stop, and go up a little, but Mr. Buzzard say, "Good safe, come down, come down," and down it start, and poor Ann Nancy whisper quick, "Go up, good safe, go up," and it go back. And so they go for a long time, only Mr. Buzzard can't hear Ann Nancy, 'cause she whisper soft to the safe, and he cock he eye in 'stonishment to see the old safe bob up and down, like it gone 'stracted.

So they keep on, "Good safe, good safe, come down," "Good safe, good safe, go up," till poor Ann Nancy's brain get 'fused, and she make a slip and say, "Good safe, come down," and down it come.

Mr. Buzzard, he open the do', and there he find Ann Nancy, and he say, "Oh you poor mis'erable creeter," and he just 'bout to eat her up, when poor Ann Nancy, she begged so hard, and compliment his fine presence, and compare how he sail in the clouds while she 'bliged to crawl in the dirt, till he that proudful and set up he feel mighty pardoning spirit, and he let her go.

But Ann Nancy ain't got no gratitude in her mind; she feel she looked down on by all the creeters, and it sour her mind and temper. She ain't gwine forget anybody what cross her path, no, that she don't, and while she spin her house she just study constant how she gwine get the best of every creeter.

She knew Mr. Buzzard's weak point am he stomach, and one day she make it out dat she make a dining, and 'vite Mr. Buzzard and Miss Buzzard and the chillens. Ann Nancy, she know how to set out a-dining for sure, and when they all done got sot down to the table, and she mighty busy passing the hot coffee to Mr. Buzzard and the little Buzzards, she have a powerful big pot of scalding water ready, and she lip it all over poor old Mr. Buzzard's head, and the poor old man go bald-headed from that day. And he don't forget it on Ann Nancy, 'cause you 'serve she de onliest creeter on the top side the earth what Mr. Buzzard don't eat.

#### VI. THE WOOLLY CROWS.

Yes, sah, it do look like them was crows sure enough, but, sah, them's only the old time woolly crows, and if you go over yon by the woods, and shoot at 'em, you fetch down just bits of wool, but no man ever fetch down them crows.

It's mighty cur'ous 'bout them crows, sure, but they done been flying right there every corn season since my 'membrance, but they can't hurt the corn, 'cause their mouths full of wool.

Well, I hearn 'em tell how one season, long 'fore my time, the folks was tormented by the crows to beat all; and the more they shoots, 'pears like the more they come, till all the county was black with 'em; and when the corn laid by, then the black rascals turn in, and go for to 'stroy all the little young birds what's in the nestes.

The old birds, they take on powerful, but they can't help themselves, till one day them crows, they find Mr. Mockingbird's nestes, and just 'stroy it.

Well, sah, Mr. Mockingbird, he have a mighty long 'membrance, and he call he mind how one time old Massa James had a sheep to die, and the crows done pick the last bone.

Well, sah, this was a fact: Mr. Mockingbird, he tell all the birds what was in he mind, and them birds, if they don't all turn in and tote wool to the old tub of tar what stand by the house lot, till they done cover it all plum over, and it look like the old sheep, sure 'nough.

Well, sah, when old Miss Crow come sailing 'long, she cock her eye down on that yer wool and she say to herself, that yer was a sheep, sure, and she make off and tell all the crow's family, and they all come and dive into that old tar what's covered with wool, and they just bound in reason to get their mouths full of tar and wool, what they can't spit out.

Then they stand round a bit and look foolish, then they fly round and round, but they can't eat no more corn; so nobody take noticement now, but every corn season yet them woolly crows fly over that field constant.

#### VII. HOW COME THE PIGS CAN SEE THE WIND.

Did you done hear how come that old Sis Pig can see the wind? Well, to be sure, ain't you never hear that? Well, don't you take noticement, many and many a time, how unrestful, and 'stracted like, the pigs is, when the wind blows, and how they squeal, and run this yer way and that yer way, like they's 'stracted?

Well, sah, all dat gwine on is along of the fact that they can see the wind.

One time the old sow, she have five little pigs, — four black and one white one.

Now old Brer Wolf, he have a mighty good mouth for pig meat, and he go every night and walk round and round Miss Pig's house, but Sis Pig, she have the door lock fast.

One night, he dress up just like he was a man, and he put a tall hat on he head, and shoes on he foots; he take a sack of corn, and he walk hard, and make a mighty fuss on the brick walk, right up



to the door, and he knock loud on the door in a great haste, and Sis Pig, she say, "Who there?" and Brer Wolf say up, loud and powerful, Brer Wolf did, "Quit your fooling, old woman, I is the master, come for to put my mark on the new pigs; turn 'em loose here lively."

And old Sis Pig, she mighty skeered, but she feared not to turn 'em out; so she crack the door, and turn out the four black pigs, but the little white pig, he am her eyeballs, the little white pig was, and when he turn come, she just shut the door and hold it fast.

And Brer Wolf, he turn down the corn, and just pick up the four little pigs and tote 'em off home; but when they done gone, he mouth hone for the little pig, but Sis Pig, she keep him mighty close. One night Brer Wolf was wandering up and down the woods, and he meet up with old Satan, and he ax Brer Wolf, old Satan did, can he help him, and Brer Wolf he just tell him what on he mind, and old Satan told him to lead on to Miss Pig's house, and he help him out.

So Brer Wolf he lead on, and directly there Sis Pig's house, and old Satan, he 'gin to puff and blow, and puff and blow, till Brer Wolf he that skeered, Brer Wolf is, that he hair fairly stand on end; and Miss Pig she done hear the mighty wind, and the house a-cracking, and they hear her inside down on her knees, just calling on God A'mighty for mercy; but old Satan, he puff and blow, and puff and blow, and the house crack and tremble, and he say, old Satan did, "You hear this yer mighty wind, Sis Pig, but if you look this yer way you can see it.

And Sis Pig, she that skeered, she crack the door and look out, and there she see old Satan's breath, like red smoke, blowing on the house, and from that day the pigs can see the wind, and it look red, the wind look red, sah. How we know that? I tell you how we know that, sah: if anybody miss a pig and take the milk, then they can see the wind, and they done tell it was red.

*Emma M. Backus.*

SALUDA, N. C.

EDITOR'S NOTE. — In printing the tales here given, the dialect has been disregarded, so far as phonetic variations are concerned; on the other hand, the errors of grammar, abbreviations, and syncopations have been retained. The spelling has been changed to the common English form, except in the case of a very few words, so familiar as to be perfectly comprehensible. It is obviously impossible by means of the regular alphabet to reproduce negro dialect with any accuracy. A phonetic alphabet is essential for such purpose, and it is desirable that a certain number of texts in such alphabet be noted, but evidently useless to multiply such texts. The dialect being once given, any person who has made himself master of it can read the common English orthography with proper dialectic sound and inflection. The dropping of the *r*, the alteration of *th* into *d*,

and similar changes, can easily be reproduced. But the attempt to indicate the manner of enunciation by the usual English signs results in confusions and contradictions innumerable, and after all the dialect is without interest, save for those previously intimate with it. An equally serious fault is that the meaning and real interest of the tale is disguised; a dialectic story is apt to be a mere piece of jargon, in which the lack of deep human interest is atoned for by a spelling which is usually mere affectation. As an individual opinion, and with reservation of the right to alter the method in any particular case, the advice may be given to collectors, to follow the expression of the reciters word for word, to observe elisions and contractions, but otherwise to use ordinary English orthography. If they are capable of indicating the peculiarities of the dialect by means of a phonetic alphabet, or even by a minute account of the manner of treating the different letters, so much the better. This counsel is intended, not to contradict but to emphasize the principle, that the utility of a record depends upon its faithfulness word for word; no attempt need be made to correct the grammar.

*W. W. N.*